

Best Practices for Automation in Libraries in North Carolina

Background & Purpose

The State Library of North Carolina has developed these best practices for automation in libraries in North Carolina to serve as guidelines in preparing for, implementing and managing an automated system.

In 1998 the State Library of North Carolina issued *Minimum Standards for Library Automation in North Carolina* to serve as guidelines for planning, Request for Proposal (RFP) preparation, and evaluation of library automation systems. The standards were developed in consultation with the state's library community and with consultants specializing in library automation.

The standards were revised in 2002 to reflect changes in library automation standards, available technologies, and the library automation marketplace. The standards were reviewed and updated by two consultants: Robert Burgin, RB Software and Consulting; and Julie Blume Nye. Certain items which dealt primarily with library practices were incorporated into this new document, which was approved and issued on October 10, 2002.

Introduction

In this document, minimum expectations for best practices use the terms “**must**” or “**required.**” Practices that are preferred use the terms “*may*,” “*should*,” and “*recommended.*”

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1. Cataloging Standards and Local Practices

1.1. The cataloging standard for bibliographic records is the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, second edition (AACR2). All catalog records **must** meet or exceed the first or minimal level of description in AACR2 (Encoding Level K), plus series statement and subject headings where applicable. Catalog records *should* meet the second or full level of description in AACR2 (Encoding Level I).

1.2. Subject headings **must** be assigned from a controlled vocabulary subject heading system/thesaurus provided for in the US MARC Format for Bibliographic Data, for example: Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), Library of Congress Subject Headings for Children's Literature, National Library of Medicine's Medical Subject Headings (MeSH). Libraries *should* use the latest edition of LCSH or LCSH for Children's Literature, if appropriate.

1.3. Holdings information **must** be kept current. Holdings records **must** be structured with summary holdings statements provided for multi-part items and serials containing data elements specified in the US MARC Format for Holdings Data and ANSI/NISO Z39.44 Level Three. Detailed holdings statements *should* be supplied according to ANSI/NISO Z39.44 Level Four.

1.4. The automated system database **must** be maintained to ensure that individual bibliographic records accurately reflect the collection. Additions and deletions to the collection and changes in holdings and locations *should* be recorded within three months.

1.5. Recognizing the impracticality of upgrading retrospective cataloging to full-level AACR2 standards, libraries *should* follow the retrospective conversion guidelines in the latest edition of OCLC's *Bibliographic Formats and Standards*, 2nd edition.

1.6. Abbreviated bibliographic records (below AACR2 minimal-level cataloging) *may* be used for materials of a transitory nature, such as those on order, in process, or having a short shelf life.

1.7. Libraries *should* implement name, subject and series authority control.

1.8. All records *should* contain one or more of the following numeric identifiers, if available: LCCN, ISBN, ISSN, OCLC record number, STRN, GPO stock number.

1.9. Changes in US MARC formats *should* be implemented by the library within 18 months of implementation by the library's automated system vendor.

1.10. Barcode numbers *should* be entered in 949 or an appropriate 8XX field of the record. The tag selected *should* be used consistently throughout the entire database, and barcodes for each piece *should* be delimited separately.

1.11. Retrospective conversion efforts *should* be preceded by weeding and inventory of all collections to be converted.

1.12. At least 75% of the cataloged circulating collection *should* be in machine-readable form before a library's automated system is implemented for patrons, to ensure a robust database and minimal reliance on "on the fly" transactions. The library *should* have a concrete plan for the completion of retrospective conversion.

1.13. If the library expects to replace its automated system, the library *should* delay barcoding projects until the integrated system vendor has been selected; however, most of the collection *should* be barcoded before the system is implemented for circulation.

2. Library Policies and Local Practices

2.1. Libraries **must** schedule time for staff training and practice before implementing the system for the public. Libraries *may* phase in the purchase and implementation of modules.

2.2. Libraries that will not administer the system in-house **must** involve MIS personnel (who will administer the system) in the technical evaluation of systems during the selection process. Library staff *should* make the final decision.

2.3. Libraries *should* create policies and procedures for the use of the automated system.

2.4. Libraries *should* have a back-up system (either automated or manual) in place for circulating materials to patrons.

2.5. Libraries *should* designate and train both a primary and a back-up system administrator.

2.6. Libraries *should* have a technology plan that is consistent with state and local planning, and that is integrated with other planning done by the library or parent institution.

2.7. Libraries *should* allow other North Carolina libraries and individuals on the Internet to search their library's online catalog.